

College poll reveals support for CIA and FBI

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Despite recent campus complaints about CIA activities, most college students have a high regard for the Central Intelligence Agency, according to a recent College Poll study. In addition, students also rate the Federal Bureau of Investigation highly, the study reveals.

On the other hand, students are divided on the policy of having CIA secret assignments conducted on the university campuses, the interviews indicate.

Students on over 100 campuses were asked how they rated the CIA. Eight out of 10 said "excellent to good;" the balance said either "fair or poor." Seven out of 10 students rated the FBI either "good" or "excellent;" 2 out of 10 felt the organization was "fair," and only 1 out of 10 said "poor."

Secret programs?

Last year, revelations that certain colleges were cooperating with secret CIA programs became an issue in student uprisings. Recently, students claimed that similar programs are now being conducted on certain campuses, although most college officials have discontinued such projects. Students are equally divided on whether such projects should be undertaken by the colleges. In past studies, most students backed defense department sponsored programs on the campuses.

"It is probably all right to have the CIA working with college professors," said a Yale senior, "but the secrecy makes it seem dangerous and out of context with the academic atmosphere. It's this aspect which concerns most students."

An Ohio State junior said, "There's a difference between the CIA and the Defense Department. Most CIA projects could be conducted elsewhere, but many of the university laboratories are the only place where defense-oriented research can be conducted."

Radical views

The radical students have quite the opposite view. A Michigan

State S.D.S. member said, typically, "The war-mongering CIA must be kept off the campuses. In fact, they should be shut down entirely."

The FBI is not generally linked with campus activity in the eyes of the students, although many government agents have been keeping track of radical movements on the campuses. It was disclosed last spring that undercover agents, both federal and local, had infiltrated into activist groups. Most students do not object to such activity, although the consensus of the student body is that the student uprisings are not primarily communist inspired, the College Poll shows.

J. Edgar Hoover, in particular, rates high in student opinion. A recent College Poll study of student attitudes toward well-known Americans indicates that the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation rates among the top 20 best liked living American men. Few students, however, can identify the Director of the CIA. Most students link the late Allen Dulles with their image of the CIA director.

Intelligence activity

The need for worldwide intelligence activity is recognized by the current college generation. Students feel, according to the College Poll, that we rate behind Russia in the penetration and excellence of international intelligence. The image of the Russian intelligence service is that of cool efficiency. The British also rate high in students' minds as far as efficient international spy activity is concerned.

A Penn State coed said, "We have to know what's going on in the world and should have the best intelligence of any nation. The CIA probably does a better job than we know, since most of the work is secret, but the Russians spend more money and have more manpower than we have in this area."

Students are also aware that Red China is increasing its worldwide spy activity and is infiltrating into many countries, particularly Africa.

A minority viewpoint on the campus is that of a George Washington University student who felt that "The CIA gets into too many overseas operations where they don't belong. They fell down at the Bay of Pigs and Guatamala. They also interfered too much in foreign government affairs. They shouldn't perform political actions, but merely intelligence actions."

"Right to recruit"

Most students feel the CIA has the right to recruit on the campus along with other American corporations and the armed forces. While there have been isolated demonstrations against the CIA this fall, on the whole, student attitude is that the government is justified in securing its manpower from the college generation to staff the Central Intelligence Agency.

"If Dow Jones and General Electric can send their men here, why not the CIA?" said a Syracuse University senior in a typical student reaction.

All in all, student attitudes toward the governmental, intelligence and law enforcement agencies is similar to that reflected by other national polls of the general public's opinion toward these groups. While students may deplore isolated activities of both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency, the campus consensus is that these organizations are necessary and part of our government and that they perform their missions well.

The College Poll, the continuing study of college student opinion, is conducted by the Greenwich College Research Center, Greenwich, Conn.

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